

State of Alaska Department of **Transportation and Public Facilities**

Frank H. Murkowski
Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-
0001



Mike Barton
Commissioner
907-465-3900
FAX: 907-586-8365
www.dot.state.ak.us

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Department of Transportation Concludes LeConte Investigation

(Juneau)—The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) today concluded its investigation into the May 10 grounding of the State ferry, LeConte. The ferry sustained heavy damage to its hull after running aground on Cozian Reef, which prompted the immediate evacuation of all 86 passengers to lifeboats. The vessel remained in perilous danger until the ship was secured and transported to Alaska Ship and Drydock in Ketchikan.

DOT has found that Captain Harvey Williamson and Chief Mate William Petrich were negligent in their conduct. In favorable weather, Williamson and Petrich altered course without first fixing the vessel's position, failed to see the navigation aid marking the route past Cozian Reef and grounded at full speed.

Due to the serious nature and cause of the accident, the Department of Transportation and Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) has decided to terminate the employment of both Williamson and Petrich, effective immediately.

Preliminary estimates to repair the LeConte are approximately \$3 million with a completion date expected about September 1. The AMHS has rescheduled the State ferry Taku to serve a number of ports while others are being served by a vessel under contract to AMHS. Alternative service will continue to be provided as necessary until the LeConte returns to service.

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For additional information, please contact Nona Wilson with DOT/AMHS at (907) 465-3904.